

# NEWS

*From the Office of*

## Bill Postmus

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors  
San Bernardino County



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### **SUPERVISORS APPROVE POSTMUS' PLAN TO UPDATE COUNTY ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

SAN BERNARDINO – Receiving unanimous approval today from his colleagues for a contract with a local economics consulting firm, Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus said the County of San Bernardino is “taking its first step toward improving our efforts to attract and retain quality, high-paying jobs for our local residents.”

Mr. Postmus announced last week that improving the County's economic development efforts would be one of his main priorities during his two-year term as Chairman of the Board.

In approving Mr. Postmus' proposal, the Supervisors approved an agreement with Redlands economist John Husing, Ph.D., to develop and improve the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The \$50,000 agreement is for work outside the scope of an existing County economic consulting agreement with Dr. Husing's firm, Economics and Politics, Inc. The new strategy is scheduled for completion in April.

In February 2000, a draft economic development strategic plan was prepared by Dr. Husing, and some of its recommendations were implemented. However, the Board of Supervisors at the time did not formally adopt the strategy as a whole.

Recently, Dr. Husing has gathered considerable data relative to land-use, growth patterns, demographics and economic indicators in six different geographic regions of the County in conjunction with the County's General Plan Update. Dr. Husing's firm was used as a consultant to develop an economic component to the General Plan relating to land use in the unincorporated areas of the County. He has also provided sales-tax revenue forecasting services to the County.

“The County has made some significant progress in the area of economic development,” Postmus said. “For instance, we've opened business resource centers and expanded Redevelopment areas. However, there is still no formal economic development strategy adopted by the Board for use as a basic decision-making tool.

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## ECONOMIC STRATEGY

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“That is a shortcoming that will now be addressed, now that the Board has approved this project,” Postmus said.

According to Chairman Postmus, Dr. Husing proposes to improve upon the original strategy in several key ways, including:

- Regionalizing the plan into six geographic areas, so that unique characteristics of each region can be taken into consideration;
- Completing an assessment of the educational strengths and challenges of the region;
- Assessing other infrastructure attributes, challenges and opportunities that may exist based on historic and likely future growth patterns, and
- Analyzing the County's economic development organization, its funding and its programs, and making recommendations on ways to increase the County's focus on employer attraction and retention.

“Any strategy, in order to be relevant, needs to be regularly updated,” said Chairman Postmus. “And so much has happened in our economy and in our organization in the past five years that we’re actually overdue for an update to our Economic Development Strategy. We need a fresh look at how we’re doing and what we should consider doing differently.”